

VZCZCXRO3080
OO RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHPG #1156/01 2911407
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 181407Z OCT 07
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9726
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI 0011

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRAGUE 001156

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

EUR/NCE FOR ALEX TRATENSEK, NEA/IR TIM STANDAERT, EUR/ERA
FOR JEFF GIAUQUE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/18/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [IR](#) [PHUM](#) [EUN](#) [EZ](#)
SUBJECT: IRANIAN DELEGATION VISIT: CZECH REPUBLIC SEEKS
ENHANCED RELATIONS

REF: A. PRAGUE 1146
[1](#)B. PRAGUE 788
[1](#)C. PRAGUE 701

PRAGUE 00001156 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Political Economic Counselor Michael Dodman for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: Iranian Parliamentary Majlis Alaeddin Boroujedi of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee met with Czech Foreign Minister Schwarzenberg and several parliamentary groups during his visit to Prague October 15-17. Based on conversations with the Foreign Minister, MFA officials and Parliamentarians, the Czechs focused primarily on upgrading diplomatic relations between the two countries and consistently delivered tough messages on Iran's nuclear program. End Summary.

FM Speaks Candidly with Iranians

[1](#)2. (C) FM Schwarzenberg spoke with Ambassador Graber at a reception on the evening of October 16, shortly after his meeting with the Iranian Parliamentary delegation. Schwarzenberg said he had been blunt with the Iranians and left no doubt that the Czech Republic disagreed with the Iranian regime's actions. Ambassador Josef Koutsky, who serves in the MFA Middle East and Africa Department, and Hana Jelinkova, MFA Iran desk officer, who attended the FM's meeting, provided additional details of this meeting, which involved a discussion of upgrading diplomatic relations, Iran's nuclear program, human rights (executions and the death penalty), Iraq, Afghanistan, and Iran's unhelpful statements regarding Israel.

Czechs - Upgrade Diplomatic Status and Keep Communication Open

[1](#)3. (C) The Foreign Minister told the Ambassador he believes it is important to continue to talk with the Iranians. This is a sentiment echoed by Jan Hamacek, Chairman of the Czech Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, who issued the invitation to these Iranian Parliamentarians, and Martin Povejsil, MFA Political Director. Hamacek has emphasized to the press that given the fact that the Czech Republic will hold the EU Presidency in 2009, "it is necessary to hold a dialogue with Iran." Povejsil, in his conversation with PolCouns on October 17, stated that the FM meeting should be seen as part of the long-standing Czech effort to re-establish full diplomatic relations with Tehran (reftel B).

¶4. (C) Ambassador Koutsky noted that diplomatic relations between the two nations have been strained since 1998, when Prague-based Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty launched its Farsi service. Iran reacted by recalling its Ambassador and imposing trade sanctions on the Czech Republic. According to Koutsky, this is the third time in 10 years that the Czechs have formally sought to upgrade relations. The Iranians have not provided a response as to whether or not they will upgrade relations, nor have the Iranians provided a timeline regarding when a decision will be made; no additional visits by either country have been scheduled at this point.

Blunt on Iran's Nuclear Program, Human Rights, Iraq,
Afghanistan and Statements on Israel

¶5. (C) The Foreign Minister and the MFA took pains to highlight that the Czechs pressed the Iranians on their nuclear program and that Schwarzenberg reiterated the EU message outlined in the GAERC conclusions of October 15-16 (Note: Schwarzenberg participated in the EU GAERC on October 15-16 before meeting this delegation on the afternoon of October 16. End Note.). On human rights, the Foreign Minister apparently challenged the Iranians on the number of executions in Iran and their use of the death penalty. Apparently the Iranians acknowledged that executions are not in anyone's interest, but also cited the fact that under Sharia law, which they follow, this is allowed. On Iraq and Afghanistan, the Czechs asked the Iranians not to interfere, which would help stabilize the neighborhood. They also called on the Iranians to avoid "unhelpful" statements about Israel. The Iranian Parliamentary delegation responded by simply promising to carry back the Czech message to their colleagues.

PRAGUE 00001156 002.2 OF 002

Iranians - Question Whether MD Will Lead to Arms Race

¶6. (U) There continues to be a fair bit of press surrounding this delegation's visit. In addition to a press conference on October 15, several Czech politicians have made public comments and Boroujedi gave several lengthy interviews. Basically, the Iranians used every opportunity to consistently criticize the US missile defense plan. Boroujedi has particularly linked Missile Defense with a future arms race and in one of the Czech daily papers on October 18, he is quoted as stating, "If the system (missile defense) was aimed only at Iran, why would Russian President Putin be so upset? The system is of course aimed against Russia. This is the reason behind another arms race, which has already started."

Government is "Naive"

¶7. (SBU) Several members of parliament, including many within PM Topolanek's party have expressed displeasure with this visit. Former Foreign Minister Svoboda during an interview on the nightly news on October 15, stated that such a meeting (with the FM) would never have occurred while he was in office. Others have criticized the government as "naive" to think that meeting with the Iranians will accomplish anything useful.

Visit Schedule

¶8. (U) This visit was arranged at the invitation of Jan Hamacek, Chairman of the Czech Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee. Boroujedi was accompanied by three other members of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, a MFA official and a secretary. The Iranian delegation held multiple meetings with both the upper and lower Parliamentary

Houses, but only one government meeting (with the Foreign Minister). Boroujedi also gave a public address at the Association for International Affairs.

Comment

19. (C) The Czech government clearly wants to establish full diplomatic relations with the Iranians, and we can expect the Czech outreach efforts will continue, although the Czechs have demonstrated no intention to soften any message to the Iranians in order to achieve this result. According to Ambassador Koutsky, the Foreign Minister did not carry a specific message from the EU FMs (other than the GAERC conclusions), and was not asked to carry a message to them by the Iranians. Nonetheless, the Czech MFA anticipates that Schwarzenberg will discuss this meeting with his colleagues October 18 in Lisbon on the margins of the EU Heads of Government meeting, which he is attending with the Prime Minister.
Graber